

015-2-11

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14 November 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

FROM: [REDACTED]
Deputy Chief, Operations Group

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SUBJECT: Management Trip Report -- 25 September - 19 October

Antwerp PMU -- 26 September

1. I took the occasion of a day's rest stop at the beginning of my TDY to visit the Antwerp Press Monitoring Unit. I had a thorough briefing on its operation and exploitation of data bases by unit chief [REDACTED]. He is obviously quite enthusiastic in his new position. I was interested in the possibility of the unit serving as a contingency back-up site in the event of a BBC Monitoring strike. Available space is clearly limited. According to [REDACTED] the unit does have capability in both French and Dutch, and video recording equipment is in place. I told him I would explore with ESG/FED the placing of spare Collins receivers at the unit.

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Jordan Bureau -- 28-29 September

2. [REDACTED] provided me a full overview of the bureau's operations and the problems it faces. Like other bureau chiefs I met along the way, he pointed [REDACTED]

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9. While at the bureau I spoke to editorial TDY'ers [] and []. Both were happy to be in Nicosia and with the editorial training program. They did suggest, however, that in preparation for their TDY's it would have been helpful to have seen examples in Headquarters of more raw field copy, to have spent more time on the Wire, to have had a fuller briefing on the LSL and routing packages and a detailed briefing on the variety of message formats with which overseas editors deal. [] noted, incidentally, that in his case he found he had to give considerable effort to learning paper editing. This is likely to be the case henceforth as we send editors to the field for TDY training who have been reared only on the ATEX system.

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10. The new bureau facility is impressive. The staff, both U.S. and foreign, find it comfortable and uncrowded. However, I did hear complaints from the FBN's, not surprisingly, that many were displeased with its location and its vulnerability from a security standpoint. And this was before the recent demonstrations around the bureau and the press publicity.

Tel Aviv Bureau -- 5-7 October

11. FBA at Tel Aviv is obviously a success, lauded to the skies by editors, monitors, and communicators. What is particularly impressive is that the system is used the way an automated system should be used: A pencil is not put to paper at any point in the process. Deputy chief [] said he thinks the system is still not being fully exploited, that it has potential for such things as the handling of incoming copy. He says it is a definite recruiting tool for teletypists, no small factor given the heavy turnover.

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12. The physical plant is impressive, and morale is high, in part because of the improvement of the physical plant. The bureau chief, [] though new on the scene, has established a very good working relationship with key Embassy personnel []. The issue of the storage of classified material came up during my meeting with the Chargé, Arthur Hughes (Ambassador Pickering was out of country). Hughes briefed us on plans for a new Embassy in the Tel Aviv area. Both [] and I confirmed our interest in having the bureau located there. [] and I told him that through Embassy channels

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13. Two pressing problems at the bureau are the upgrading of positions for the two local technicians and the retention of teletypists. On the former a memorandum from then bureau chief [redacted] through FNU to PCSD argued for the upgrades based on the existence of two remote fields, FBA maintenance, maintenance of an infrared or microwave link to Embassy, and maintenance of a soon-to-be-installed TVRO. (PCSD has since rejected the request, but Operations Group will appeal the decision.) The long history of the difficulties of retaining teletypists persists, and this was underscored when, a few days after my departure, [redacted] reported that two were resigning. She will be sending a memorandum to Headquarters with some suggested solutions, but essentially the problem is one of wages. On the overall wage issue, she noted that the results of a fringe benefit survey, being implemented by the Embassy, had been forwarded to Headquarters in August. She said that a second survey and position audit, not yet adopted by the Embassy, was made in late August. On the latter, the survey's team leader did not ask the questions on night differential or approach the firms which the bureau had suggested. This is evidence, I believe, that bureau personnel must accompany any Department of State team making surveys which could affect bureaus.

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14. [redacted] said the bureau's associate editor was considering becoming a part-timer in a few months if that is acceptable to the bureau. I told her that struck me as feasible assuming the bureau can operate with a part-timer and not try to fill the full-time position vacated by the associate editor. The TVRO, I was told, should be in place by the end of October. It is in country and has been tested; the bureau is awaiting only the final word from the building manager to move ahead. [redacted] expects no trouble on this score.

Abidjan Bureau -- 10-11 October

15. Abidjan Bureau needs some attention. There are, of course, documented problems with the power supply at the bureau, and ESG/FED is taking steps to correct these through, i.a., the sending of a contract specialist to survey the power situation. At a more basic level, however, are the poor work areas for the monitors--inadequate cubicles, lighting which is both poor and heat producing, and the total absence of shelving. Once the power situation and wiring puzzle are corrected, it appears a wise, modest expenditure of funds to